

Approved For Release 2005/03/24 : CIA-RDP81M00980R000200020007-1

Office of the Attorney General

Washington, D. C. 20530

Executive Registry

78-6922

FOIA

December 11, 1978

LETTER TO HEADS OF ALL FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

RE: Freedom of Information Act Study

I am writing to seek your cooperation in a comprehensive review of how the Freedom of Information Act is currently being implemented among the agencies. This Department's Office of Information Law and Policy (OILP) has been asked to organize this review, so that we can determine if any administrative or legislative changes may be necessary or desirable. Our goal is to significantly advance the public's right to know what its government is doing while, at the same time, reducing the Act's impact on the taxpayer and on important protectible interests under the Act, such as law enforcement.

As a preliminary step, please furnish Robert L. Saloschin, the Director of OILP, a current list of names, titles, addresses and phone numbers of all officials in your agency who have a regular responsibility for implementing the Act, including regional officials. Please designate one of these persons as the principal legal contact within your agency on Freedom of Information matters. We would appreciate receiving this information from you by January 5, 1979.

We especially solicit comments or suggestions from you or your agency, with supporting facts and figures, on how a better reconciliation may be achieved between the public's right to information and the several protectible interests under the Act. Please send your response to the Office of Information Law and Policy by January 19, 1979. In addition, please prepare to furnish us with an estimate of the direct and indirect costs and gains to the government and the public of administering the Act in your agency during calendar year 1978. Telephone inquiries concerning these matters may be made to Kathryn M. Braeman, Deputy Director of OILP, (202) 633-2674.

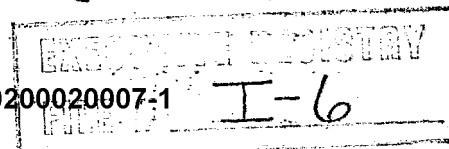
We also believe it is vital to the success of this review to seek the views of citizens, the press and other interested groups. To that end there is attached a release that we expect to issue in a few days to invite their participation.

Thank you for your consideration of these very important matters and your help in working toward a resolution of these questions.

Sincerely,

*Griffin B. Bell*

Griffin B. Bell  
Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AG  
202-633-2014

Attorney General Griffin B. Bell today announced a study of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as part of the Department of Justice's ongoing effort to encourage compliance with the act and to assess how it is being administered governmentwide.

In a letter to the heads of all agencies, Mr. Bell emphasized that how the act works is of vital interest not only to federal agencies but also to the press and the public.

All federal agencies are being asked to provide suggestions for improving the act and its administration and to furnish estimates of costs and gains attributable to their administration of the act. Agencies have also been asked to look for practical ways to increase openness, for example, offering new assistance for the average citizen or reporter in locating government documents.

Comments are also being sought on how the act is being applied in such key areas as law enforcement and business confidentiality and how such interests can be better balanced with the public's right to know. In addition, attorneys handling FOIA litigation will review ways that cases can be facilitated.

Citizens, interested groups, news media representatives, and members of the bar are invited to send suggestions

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and comments on these matters to the Office of Information  
Law and Policy, Attention Deputy Director, Department of  
Justice, Washington, D. C. 20530.

The Office will analyze this material to determine  
whether changes in agency practices or amendments to the act  
might be desirable.

A copy of Attorney General Bell's letter to the  
heads of all the agencies is attached.

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Attached provided per your request.

D/ Executive Secretary

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